

THE CLAIMS

*Please amend claims 59, 63, 73, 87, 89-94, 97, and 99-104 as follows. Please cancel claims 62, 76, 88, and 98.*

59. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) In a computer system for storing and manipulating merchant level customer purchase information received from a plurality of sources, the computer system comprising a storage device for storing the merchant level customer purchase information and a processor for placing the merchant level customer purchase information, a method for making targeting offers comprising the steps of:

receiving the merchant level customer purchase information;

organizing the merchant level customer purchase information within a predetermined organizational structure, wherein the predetermined organizational structure comprises a plurality of categories, each category comprising a plurality of sub-categories arranged in a hierarchy having a top-down taxonomy;

creating a customer preference based at least in part on the merchant level customer purchase information; and

forming a merchant level offer for a customer based on at least one of the customer preference and the merchant level customer purchase information.

60. (ORIGINALLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, further comprising the step of extending the formed offer electronically through at least one of e-mail contact and a web page.

61. (ORIGINALLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, further comprising the step of extending the formed offer through a medium comprising at least one of telephone calls and direct mail.

62. (CANCELLED)

63. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 59, further comprising the step of placing the merchant level customer purchase information into at least one of the plurality of categories and plurality of sub-categories using the processor.

64. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method of claim 59, wherein the step of forming a merchant level offer comprises forming an offer for goods and services.

65. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method of claim 59, wherein the merchant level purchase information comprises at least an amount of purchase, a location of purchase, a merchant name, and a merchant category code.

66. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method of claim 59, wherein the merchant level customer purchase information comprises merchant text strings including a purchase amount and the step of creating a customer preference comprises reviewing merchant text strings.

67. (ORIGINALLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, further comprising the step of generating a customer score based on customer accounts prior to creating the customer preference.

68. (ORIGINALLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 59, further comprising updating the organizational structure when customer purchase information reaches a threshold level.

69. (ORIGINALLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 68, further comprising setting the threshold level to reflect at least one of a date range and a dollar range.

70. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method of claim 59, wherein the step of forming a merchant level offer comprises matching selected words or characters with words or characters contained within the customer purchase information.

71. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method of claim 59, wherein the merchant level customer purchase information comprises at least one of previous credit card transactions, customer profiles, customer applications, debit card purchases, and check purchases.

72. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method of claim 59, wherein the merchant level customer purchase information comprises stored value purchase information.

73. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A system for storing and manipulating merchant level customer purchase information received from a plurality of sources, the system comprising:

means for receiving the merchant level customer purchase information, wherein the customer purchase information includes text strings;

means for organizing the merchant level customer purchase information within a predetermined organizational structure, wherein the predetermined organizational structure comprises a plurality of categories, each category comprising a plurality of sub-categories arranged in a hierarchy having a top-down taxonomy; and

means for forming a merchant level offer for a customer based on a character search or word search of the text strings in the merchant level customer purchase information.

74. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The system of claim 73, further transmission means for extending the formed merchant level offer electronically through at least one of e-mail contact and a web page.

75. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The system of claim 73, further comprising transmission means for extending the formed merchant level offer through a medium comprising at least one of telephone calls and direct mail.

76. (CANCELLED)

77. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The system of claim 73, further comprising processing means for placing the merchant level customer purchase information into at least one of the plurality of categories and plurality of sub-categories.

78. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The system of claim 73, means for forming a merchant level offer comprise means for forming an offer for goods and services.

79. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The system of claim 73, wherein the merchant level purchase information comprises at least an amount of purchase, a location of purchase, a merchant name, and a merchant category code.

80. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The system of claim 73, wherein the merchant level customer purchase information comprises merchant text strings including a purchase amount and the means for creating a customer preference comprises searching means for reviewing merchant text strings.

81. (ORIGINALLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 73, further comprising score generating means for generating a customer score based on customer accounts prior to creating the customer preference.

82. (ORIGINALLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 73, further comprising updating means for updating the organizational structure when customer purchase information reaches a threshold level.

83. (ORIGINALLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 82, further comprising means for setting the threshold level to reflect at least one of a date range and a dollar range.

84. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The system of claim 73, wherein the means for forming a merchant level offer comprises matching means for matching selected words or characters with words or characters contained within the customer purchase information.

85. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The system of claim 73, wherein the merchant level customer purchase information comprises at least one of previous credit card transactions, customer profiles, customer applications, debit card purchases, and check purchases.

86. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The system of claim 73, wherein the merchant level customer purchase information comprises stored value information.

87. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) A method for storing and manipulating merchant level customer purchase information received from a plurality of sources, the method comprising the steps of:

creating classified offers;

sorting multiple types of received merchant level customer information according to transaction type;

storing the sorted merchant level customer information in a preference database;

combining sorted merchant level customer information relevant to each customer;

storing the combined merchant level customer information in a customer account database; and

matching the combined merchant level customer information with classified offers to form a match table for ranking classified offers with respect to each account; and

accessing a link file having operator instructions for accessing information in a selected database including at least one of the preference database and the customer account database.

88. (CANCELLED)

89. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 87, wherein the operator instructions comprise character instruction information to indicate a number of characters to access in the selected database.

90. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 87, wherein the operator instructions include word matching instructions for searching for a specific word in a text string in the selected database.

91. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 87, wherein the operator instruction include instructions for searching an entire column for matching one or more words in the selected database.

92. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 87, wherein the operator instructions include skipping at least a first word and matching two subsequent words in the selected database.

93. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 87, wherein the operator instructions comprise searching for a word representative of a geographic location in the selected database.

94. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 87, wherein the operator instructions comprise duration of processing instructions.

95. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method of claim 87, wherein the merchant level customer information comprises at least one of previous credit card transactions, customer profiles, customer applications, debit card purchases, and check purchases.

96. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method of claim 87, wherein the merchant level customer information comprises stored value information.

97. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) A system for storing and manipulating merchant level customer purchase information received from a plurality of sources, the system comprising:

a classification tool for creating classified offers;

a preference engine comprising a plurality of processors for receiving and sorting multiple types of merchant level customer information based on transaction type;

a preference database for receiving and storing sorted merchant level customer information from the preference engine;

a combiner for combining merchant level sorted customer information and storing the information for each customer in a customer account database; ~~and~~

a match engine for combining the relevant merchant level customer information in the account database with classified offers from the classification tool in order to form a match table for ranking classified offers with respect to each customer account; and

a link file having operator instructions for accessing information in a selected database including at least one of the preference database and the customer account database.

98. (CANCELLED)

99. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) The system of claim 97, wherein the operator instructions comprise character instruction information to indicate a number of characters to access in the selected database.

100. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) The system of claim 97, wherein the operator instructions include word matching instructions for searching for a specific word in a text string in the selected database.

101. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) The system of claim 97, wherein the operator instruction include instructions for searching an entire column for matching one or more words in the selected database.

102. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 97, wherein the operator instructions include skipping at least a first word and matching two subsequent words in the selected database.

103. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 97, wherein the operator instructions comprise searching for a word representative of a geographic location in the selected database.

104. (PRESENTLY AMENDED) The method of claim 97, wherein the operator instructions comprise duration of processing instructions.

105. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method of claim 97, wherein the merchant level customer information comprises at least one of previous credit card transactions, customer profiles, customer applications, debit card purchases, and check purchases.

106. (PREVIOUSLY AMENDED) The method of claim 97, wherein the merchant level customer information comprises stored value information.